



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE.

CHANNING AND THE RELIGION OF NEW ENGLAND.

MR. CHADWICK, in this life of Channing,¹ has published a work to which evidently he has given many years of careful study. The reader should observe from the beginning that it is not the formal biography of Channing, and he ought to be glad that it is not. It has quite enough of "he was born such a day; he went to this school; he lived at that house; and he is buried in such a tomb"—the sort of superficial detail in which the scientific biographies delight—quite enough of this, and, let us be grateful, not too much of it. The book is really the history of the development of religion in New England for more than a century past. It ought to be read with the recollection that this is so, and I think that a fair-minded reader will acknowledge that Mr. Chadwick has not overstated the place which Dr. Channing occupies in the evolution of the form or system of Christianity in the period which the book covers.

People who read books know by this time that the biography of a preacher, or indeed of any literary man, hardly ever gives in the concrete many entertaining external events. The chances are badly against us, if we are looking for what might be called the pictorial or even the dramatic experiences, such as give interest, say, to the life of Lord Roberts, or to the life of Washington, or to the life of Robinson Crusoe. Take the external events of Channing's life as a good enough instance. He went from Newport to Harvard College; he went to Richmond as tutor in a family; he came home from Richmond and was settled as working minister in a Boston parish; his health declined, and he had to work with a colleague; he lived in Newport half the year and in Boston half the year; and he died. These facts are not specially valuable for a picturesque biography, nor would it add much to the interest of the book if four or five pages were given to a discussion whether the house he lived in were No. 49 or No. 36, or whether the entry of his baptism were correct or no. But, on the other hand, it is easy enough to see that if in the years between his birth and death his

¹ *William Ellery Channing: Minister of Religion.* By JOHN W. CHADWICK. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1903. 463 pages.

life was an important part in an evolution of opinion which has diametrically changed the religious life of New England, the interest of the reader changes from his curiosity about an individual to his wish to follow the stages of a moral revolution.

In fact, the New England into which Channing was born had been moved to the very heart by the throes and struggles of the American Revolution. It had already been new born and transformed. The decorous forms of its pulpits had not been abandoned, but the men and women of the time had no heart or courage for digging up the fossils of an old theology or threshing out its wheat from its straw. How to govern themselves, how to get rid of the shreds of the government which they had shaken off—these were the questions which occupied them; and one has only to attempt the dreary task of reading the sermons and so-called religious pamphlets of that day to see that men's hearts were not in the discussions of the old subjects, though they would have fired their very souls the century before.

Contrasted with the indifference of that period, we have in the middle of the nineteenth century, not only New England, but the whole country alive to every idealistic discussion, eager to work out the problems of the relations of God with man. We have the beginning of unfettered discussion by men who are afraid of nothing and enter joyously upon the duty, which is a pleasure, of unraveling the threads even to the beginning.

There are American historians of no little distinction who seem to have shrunk before the questions which ask how the Puritan of 1620, Calvinistic in his theology, more than Jewish in his bibliolatry, and hieratical in his politics, developed into the free and easy New Englander of 1850, who was, according to Dr. Holmes, undevout even in the way in which he swung his rattan, and to whom the books of Leviticus and Numbers were simply archæological curiosities. It is curious that no one of the historians of the United States or of New England or of Massachusetts has chosen to discuss or to answer such questions. You might suppose that the absolute change of religious habit was like the fashionable change of a woman's bonnet or the color of its strings. But certainly the change was one worth study, and that study has been given to it, so far as the period between Whitefield and our own time is concerned, only in Mr. Chadwick's book.

If you were to have Congregational churches, you could not help variety of opinion. Even the Presbyterian hierarchy could expel a freethinker, on the one side, or could welcome one who raked over burn-

ing cinders, on the other; but the churches of Plymouth Colony were purely independent; and the churches of the Bay saved themselves from absolute independence only by inventing the word "congregational." So long as clerical caste held the supremacy, which was perhaps for fifty years after the settlement, it made but little difference whether the constitution were Congregational or Presbyterian. But after that half-century without any uniform confession—and these churches had none—and with no compulsory power to whip any recusant church back into harness, that happened in New England which will happen under any such conditions, that the laity repudiates the follies of the priesthood and states its own religion for itself, or very likely refuses to make any formal statement whatever. This has happened, for instance, in Switzerland. It was easy enough under such conditions for hard and fast Calvinism to give way and for the milder Arminian system to come in—a system which wholly rejected the idea of elect castes in the matter of salvation, and insisted that salvation was free for anybody who would accept it.

Simply as matter of history it followed that when Whitefield, in his triumphal progress through New England, compelled people to take sides, yes or no, as to Calvinistic doctrine, all those churches of which the majority were Arminian in theological doctrine refused to adopt any dogmatic creed. It was only those churches where the majority held to Calvinistic formulas which chose to reduce those formulas to writing, in the hope of giving them permanency.

What is called the Unitarianism of New England was in its origin the Arminianism of New England. When in the beginning of the last century the Calvinistic writers called them Unitarian, they accepted the name as frankly as the Methodists accepted the name "Methodist," though probably in both cases it had been intended as a term of offense. In truth, however, the Unitarianism of New England was not derived from the Unitarianism of England. It is worth making this remark because all discussion relating to the religion of New England is worthless which turns very seriously on questions regarding the character or personality of Jesus Christ. From the time of Jonathan Mayhew to this time the divergence of opinion among the Unitarian people and their ministers as to the place of Jesus Christ in the world's history has varied all the way between extremes of opinion. On the other hand, the Unitarian church has been and is absolutely at one in insisting upon the "real presence" of the living God, and in the consequent right of each individual to maintain his own personal relations with a God who is really at hand.

Mr. Chadwick's history and interpretation of this profound idealism will contain much which is new to some closet students. He has sometimes extracted from quite unexpected quarters testimony as to what closet students would call the latitudinarianism of New England in the eighteenth century. As early as 1743 the clergy "were not dumb dogs." Chauncy's "Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England," is acknowledged to have been the most effective criticism made on Whitefield and his friends. It claimed for a diligent use of the ordinary means of grace a more efficient operation than that of revivalism with its "spasms of sense and sensibility."²

Mr. Chadwick quotes Dr. Andrew Peabody as saying in 1780:

There was only one Calvinist preacher in Boston, Samuel Cooper, the minister of Brattle Street, with a liberal congregation, while Eckley of the Old South was liberal with an orthodox congregation. Such mixtures were not uncommon, and generally the people in the pews were more radical than the ministers in the pulpits, an interesting comment on the charge of timid reticence which was brought against the ministers a little later, and which has persisted till our time.

Mr. Chadwick does not recall, as he might have done, the epigram of the time which says of Samuel Cooper:

At Brattle Street
You oft will meet
With silver-tongued Sam.
He gently glides
Between both sides,
And so avoids the jam.

The truth is that the educated laymen were in advance of the ministry in these affairs. And it would be safe to say that the Congregational clergy of New England in the eighteenth century resembled rather curiously the clergy of the establishment of England at the same time. That is to say, they were a respectable set of magistrates for affairs of conscience and morals. They were a peerage for life. Once minister of Old Town or New Town, you could not be put out, and a sort of mechanical discharge of a sacred duty followed, such as is apt to follow wherever there is an establishment. Establishment! Yes! that which is established.

It was the curse of the ministerial profession then that in the separation of theology from life the ministers really did not know men as well as laymen did. The directors of divinity schools now should

²Is not that good—"spasms of sense and sensibility"? This is one of Mr. Chadwick's bright epigrams.

remember this, for here is the great danger of their institutions and the peril of the men who study in them. Take this very matter of a free salvation. "I know salvation's free. It's free for you and me;" as old Methodists sang. If that is true, you can trust your state to universal suffrage. If every man has a right to communion with God and the joys of heaven, why, you can order every man in Massachusetts to carry a musket to fight against Burgoyne; and when the time comes, you do. All the same, that man will expect to vote when the time comes, and we cannot help ourselves. We give him the suffrage. But, of course, we do not give him the suffrage, and we dare not bid him take his musket to fight, if the chances are seven out of eight that he is a child of Satan and incapable of good. No community is so mad as to give its weapons into the hands of those who are born devils. Or, to state the same thing in fewer words, if you throw off the divine right of priests—and the rule works the other way—if you grant men freedom in their political opinions, freedom in the matters of this world, you must grant them freedom in their religious opinions which relate to both worlds.

Indeed, the downfall of Calvinism in America may be more directly traced to the upward progress of opinion and practice in political affairs than to the skilful dialectics of men of ecclesiastical training.

Dr. Wendte tells an excellent story of a "leader of industry" who had grown up in a mining camp. This man said to him that he didn't know much about religion, but that one of the boys had left in his cabin a book by a man named Waldo Emerson. "I read the book, and I found that this Emerson had said just what I had been thinking ever since I was a man."

That excellent story illustrates very well what happened, first to a handful of people in a Boston meeting-house, then in a larger circle of Arminian churches in New England, and, to a certain extent, afterward throughout the United States, when Channing began to say in the pulpit just what the hearers had always thought, but perhaps had not dared to say.

The certain crisis came, when in the year 1819 some people in Baltimore, most of them of New England training, established what they called the First Independent Christian Church in that city. They invited Channing to preach the sermon at the ordination of its minister, Rev. Jared Sparks. Channing's reputation was well established, and I have always supposed that the audience was largely flavored by the presence of Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and possibly even

Episcopalian and Catholic clergymen, but perhaps this was not so. Whether it were or were not, the sermon was printed and the result was the same. Almost with the innocence of a child Channing arrayed on the right and left the favorite idols of the Calvinistic worship, painted them, not in an extravagant way, but with simple colors, and then moved serenely down between these rows of idols, slapping each of them in the face, not exactly with contempt, but with indifference. The sermon seemed to say: "this is what men pretend to believe, but what nobody of sense really cares for." Now, it is observed that men hate to be called fools as they hate nothing else. You can prove that a man's reputation for truth is a little damaged; you can prove that he has been rather a tyrant in his house; you can prove that in a bargain he has not considered the other fellow; but when you tell him that he is a fool, he is not pleased. And I am disposed to think that the gentlemen who had trained themselves to a sort of functional habit of repeating the Calvinistic dogmas resented the New Englander's contempt for it as they would not have resented merely a demonstration of its infidelity. What is called the arrogance of New England, or of Boston, was charged upon the assertion which in a certain sense was new.

I like to repeat what the late Dr. Richard Storrs said to me, very earnestly once, that if in the tens and twenties of the nineteenth century the Congregational churches of New England had had anything to do together, what he called the great schism in their body would never have taken place. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was born in 1810. He thought if it had been well at work at that time, all the Congregational churches would have co-operated with each other, and they would have left Calvinism to take care of itself.

But it is hardly worth while now to refer to such passages of a century ago. Calvinism has gone to its own place now. There are a few who do it reverence in a Pickwickian fashion, but practically the fatherhood of God is sought everywhere, and the children of God are awaking to their privileges and to their duties.

I hope the reader will not feel that, instead of calling his attention to Mr. Chadwick's admirable book, I have been only gossiping about details in the history to which that book is devoted. Really even a careful abstract of the book would not take its place for an intelligent student of the history of life in America. It must be carefully read from beginning to end.

I do not like to pass by without referring to what one might call the generosity of the book, as the writer tries to recall to our memories entirely independent lines of thought and work which have led up to the broader theological statements of today. Thus there are a few pages very well devoted to Rich, Murray, Ballou, and the rest, who have built up the Universalist communion in America, the communion whose central doctrine is now to be heard enforced in almost all pulpits. Perhaps he might have gone farther in showing how the Universalist churches of America are the legitimate children of the Calvinistic church, precisely as the Unitarian church of America is the legitimate child of Arminianism.

"Murray was a Calvinist in his major and minor premises, but drawing a different conclusion from that of Edwards and Hopkins. Only the elect were saved, but everybody was elect; 'as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'" In 1903 no distinction but that of history can be found between the Unitarian and the Universalist churches. To the popular mind of nine-tenths of the country they are undoubtedly the same. Both names begin with U, and that for the "general reader" is enough. To the few people who care anything about history this genealogical reference is interesting.

Channing himself, as Mr. Chadwick shows all along, was surprised to find that he was thought to be the minister of a new religion. He never laid down any hard and fast statement of theology. His own speculative views underwent as distinct an evolution as did those of other people of his time; and I suppose that the feature of this book which will most impress those who knew nothing about him or American Unitarianism will be its frank acknowledgment that Channing's statements, even on points of much importance, were changing all the time, between that early moment when he was horror-struck as he heard the rhetoric of Hopkins and the very last year of his life.

Henry Ward Beecher once pointed out to me a long row of pamphlet boxes in which my own sermons were buried, and asked me what I had there. I said timidly that they were my old sermons. Beecher said, almost with scorn: "Why do you keep your sermons?" I was startled, but I had to reply, and I said: "Why, I think a man wants to know what he used to think." "I do not see that," said Beecher; "what I want is to know what I think now."

This epigram of his suits exactly with Channing's turn of mind. The modern generation entertains itself with comparing sermon No. 67, of April 1, 1809, against sermon No. 1,999, December 25, 1841.

But really such comparison is but the merest play of Chinese puzzles and has not the value of the tactics of a game of backgammon.

Let us hope for many such books. Hero-worship is a very good thing, but hero-worship is not everything. Is it perhaps the greatest thing of all to speak for one's time—to be enough ahead of it to lead men where they falter or are afraid, not to be so far from it that they cannot hear one sound or other appeal? We despise Erasmus because, while he knew so much, he did so little. We are grateful to Luther because he did so much when he knew so little.

“Who dares think one thing and another tell
My heart detests him as the gates of hell.”

Channing is one of those people who dare say what they think. He, like other people, gives clothes to the skeleton, giving weapons to the soldiers.

EDWARD E. HALE.

BOSTON, MASS.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

MORE than two years have passed since Professor G. A. Smith in his volume of Yale Lectures declared the war between criticism and the traditional views of Scripture ended and the fixing of the indemnity as the only thing left. Which side was to prescribe and which was to pay “the indemnity” Professor Smith did not leave indefinite. Not long afterward, however, came another herald claiming to speak on the subject of this war, Dr. John Smith, of Edinburgh, claiming that the contest was far from over, and that when it is ended, not the traditional side, but the critical, would be the one to pay the indemnity. Whether one or the other of the Drs. Smith be right in his declarations, there is a great host of Christian students and thinkers who are interested in the contest. And they cannot believe with the enthusiastic professor that the only thing left is the fixing of the indemnity, although they are not, on the other hand, as confident as Dr. John Smith is that the critical movement is on the verge of a collapse. They are interested in the answer to two questions: first, What is the present state of opinion among critics? and second, If criticism should be vindicated and the verdict become absolutely unanimous in its favor, what would ensue to the faith of the Christian? Would he be called upon to give up his Bible? And on the principle that “the Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants,” would he give up his religion? Or, is there a *modus vivendi* between faith in the inspiration and authority of